Rip Van Winkle

by

Grace Dorcas Ruthenburg

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The Children's Theatre Press

"Cloverlot," Anchorage, Kentucky

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RIP VAN WINKLE

CAST

(in the order of their appearance)

Apple Woman
Anna, the Maid in Act One
Village Lady
Derrick Van Bummel
Brom Dutcher
Nicholas Vedder
Dame Buskirk
Dame Van Winkle
Extra Children
Rip Van Winkle
Little Girl
Little Boy
Judith Van Winkle (as a little girl)
Hendrick Vonderdonck
Flower Girl
First Customer
Second Customer
Pedlar
First Dwarf
Second Dwarf
Third Dwarf
Fourth Dwarf
Fifth Dwarf
Sixth Dwarf
Peter Van Vliet, the Town Crier
Diedrich
Frieda
Man on soapbox
Barmaid in Act Three
Villagers, bystanders, etc.
Judith Van Winkle (grown-up)

ACT ONE.

An inn-yard in Tarrytown, New York, twelve years before the American Revolution.

ACT TWO.

A glade in the Catskill Mountains.

ACT THREE.

Scene 1. The same glade, twenty years later.

Scene 2. The inn-yard again.

This dramatization of "Rip Van Winkle" was first produced by the Children's Theatre of Charleston, West Virginia, November 9, 1934, under the direction of Miss Sara Spencer.

Act One of "Rip Van Winkle"

RIP VAN WINKLE

By Grace Ruthenburg

ACT ONE

The scene is the inn yard of a Dutch-American village in the Catskills, twelve years before the American Revolution At one side is the King George Inn, of ancient yellow tiles, with latticed windows and gabled roof, topped with a gleaming weather-cock Beside the inn is a large tree with a bench beside it. On the other side of the stage is Rip Van Winkle's house, small and unpretentious, even poor, but scrupulously clean. A cafe table, for the serving of occasional customers in Continental style, occupies the center. A picket fence runs along the back, separating the inn yard from the common walk. A wrinkled old Apple Woman has set up her cart on the common walk, and sits there now, polishing her apples.

When the curtain rises, Derrick Van Bummel, the village schoolmaster, is seated on the bench reading a newspaper. Nicholas Vedder, the innkeeper, is sitting on the tavern steps, smoking a pipe with long, gentle puffs. Brom Dutcher, a jolly fat Dutchman, is audibly sleeping on a keg opposite Derrick. A bustling village lady crosses along the back path, curtseying to the apple woman. Anna, a comely young maid, comes out

of the inn with a tray, and crosses to the table to collect the beer steins, which she carries back into the inn. The scene reflects the placid flow of every-day life in colonial times, until Derrick Van Bummel, with mounting fury, flings down his newspaper, and rises.

DERRICK: For twenty-seven years I have been a schoolmaster in Tarrytown, and never have I read such balder-dash!

BROM: *(with the air of a man who has been too abruptly awakened)* What do you mean, Derrick Van Bummel, shouting into a man's ear like that? Besides, you've mussed up your paper till it isn't fit for a neighbor to borrow!

DERRICK: *(striding about)* Eric Van Hoogenstraaten is a bald-headed fool!

BROM: *(rescuing the paper)* He's a good editor. He wrote a fine piece about milkweed once.

DERRICK: *(seizing the paper away from him, and thumping the table with it)* Milkweed, bah! He talks here about the weather!

BROM: *(quickly, startled)* What about the weather?

DERRICK: *(pacing)* He says it's going to storm, the dolt! *(He throws the paper with violence at Nicholas Vedder, who serenely reads it.)*

BROM: You listen here, Derrick Van Bummel, it is going to storm! And if you had an ounce of common sense about you, instead of a head full of book-knowledge—

DERRICK: How do you know it's going to storm? Any sane Dutchman knows that natural phenomena—

BROM: Phenomelly fiddlesticks! I'll tell you how I know it's going to storm. My wife says to me this morning, "Brom Dutcher," she says, says she, "It thundered last night, and this morning I'm lame in my left knee." And do you know what that's a sign of?

DERRICK: Indian witches, I suppose. *(Three little children run in along the walk, and beg the Apple Woman for apples—in pantomime.)*

BROM: *(in awful accents)* It's a sign that Hendrick Hudson and his crew of sailors have come back to haunt the mountains!

DERRICK: Hendrick Hudson has been dead for a hundred and fifty-two years!

BROM: Ja, that's the worst of it. And every time he comes back with his crew of sailors, this village has such a storm as it never saw before.

DERRICK: That Hendrick Hudson business is all a fairy-tale!

BROM: You school-teachers may know arithmetic, but you don't know rheumatism, let me tell you. Peter Iffle's grandfather remembers the last storm we had, twenty years ago. And it was so great that it gave Peter's grandfather the jumping ache in both legs already. Isn't it so, Nicholas Vedder?

NICHOLAS: Ja.

DERRICK: *(louder)* You're a waffle-nosed old addle-pate, Brom Dutcher. I don't believe a word! *(Dame Buskirk bustles in, a literal whirlwind. She stops for a moment at the apple cart.)*

DAME BUSKIRK: Oh good afternoon Dame Steinbugler, have you heard the awful news yet I'm so weak from fright my legs will hardly hold me up but I thought it my duty to spread it as quickly as possible—good afternoon Nicholas Vedder—everybody in the valley ought to be warned—oh I'm so weak!

BROM: What is it, Dame Buskirk? We've heard no news—except what's in Eric Von Hoogenstraaten's newspaper.

DAME BUSKIRK: Eric Von Hoogenstraaten! He doesn't know pigs from turkeys I could draw up a better newspaper than that if I didn't have something better to do with my time . . . Oh I'm so weak!

BROM: What is the news, Dame? Here, have a chair.

DAME BUSKIRK: Yes let me rest a minute my heart is going like a trip-hammer and I left my house unswept but when I heard the news I—

BROM: Yes, Dame, the news?

DAME BUSKIRK: *(impressively)* Listen! *(The Apple Woman has come downstage from her cart, the three little children are huddled close to Dame Buskirk, drinking in every word, and the three men are clustered around her chair, ready for the bombshell. Derrick tries to act skeptical, but in reality he is as much impressed as the rest.)* There was a queer green light seen over Tarrytown churchyard last night! *(Everybody is properly awed.)*

BROM: *(triumphantly, to Derrick)* Aha, Derrick Van Bummel!

DERRICK: Ach, that was just Sexton Van Hoosie out in the twilight, counting the graves.

DAME BUSKIRK: *(bridling)* Sexton Van Hoosie's lantern doesn't make a green light you could read by, all over the Hudson Valley. It was a ship's lantern—a dead ship, at that!

BROM: It was Hendrick Hudson's ship, bringing his sailors back up the river. And that for you, Derrick Van Bummel.

DERRICK: Nonsense!

DAME BUSKIRK: It's all very well for you to say nonsense Derrick Van Bummel but wait till the storm comes up and you'll see and when you hear the thunder roll out all over the valley—*(At this point, a roar is heard from within Rip's house, shaking the very timbers.)*

DAME VAN WINKLE: *(offstage)* Rip! Rip Van Winkle! Where are you? *(Everybody on the stage freezes into terrified poses.)*

DERRICK: Ach, what was that?

NICHOLAS: That is Dame Van Winkle looking for Rip again.

DERRICK: Oh! Is—is that all? *(The little group disperses rapidly. Derrick dives behind the tree, Nicholas screens himself behind the newspaper, Brom goes under the table. The Apple Woman scurries*

back to her cart, and the three children run offstage in the same direction they came. Dame Buskirk quickly recovers her breath.)

DAME BUSKIRK: *(hurriedly)* Well I must go spread the news all through the valley though I get precious little thanks for it nobody shall say they weren't warned ahead of time—*(And still talking a blue streak, Dame Buskirk patters briskly off. Dame Van Winkle peers out her door, looking up and down the street for her errant husband, her broom handle held at a militant angle. She strides stoutly off left down the walk, in search of him.)*

BROM: *(crawling around the table leg to watch her off)* Look at her! I wouldn't stand that from my wife. I'd run away.

DERRICK *(sinking on his bench with relief)* Rip's too lazy to run anywhere.

BROM: Lazy! He helps everybody but himself. There isn't a woman in the village except Gretchen that he won't run errands for. He'd do for her too, if she didn't nag him all the time.

DERRICK: He's too good-natured to kill flies.

(From offstage right a chorus begins to be heard, singing "Ach du lieber Augustin." The three men go to the gate to look off.)

BROM: Here comes old Rip now!

DERRICK: With half the village at his heels, as usual. *(As Rip and his followers come nearer, the chorus swells, until finally the three men on the stage join in, so that by the time Rip enters, right, the stage is a riot of song. Rip is surrounded by children. He carries one small child on his back, Judith and Hendrick have hold of his hands, two other little ones clutch his pants leg. His dog, Wolf, accompanies him. He is singing breathlessly.)*

RIP: There, that'll do. That'll do. Get down now. Off with you! My back's broken in two places already.

LITTLE GIRL: Rip, look at my birdcage. The door won't stay shut.

RIP: Give it here. I fix it . . . Now, I cut a little notch here, and stick a little peg across, and there! They can't get out now.

LITTLE GIRL: Oh, thank you, Rip! *(The children are impressed with such show of skill, and cluster around to see the repaired bird-cage. A Flower Girl enters, offering her wares for sale.)*

HENDRICK: Rip, was is true about the giant with three heads?

RIP: I'll eat my whiskers if it wasn't. *(strokes dog.)*

LITTLE BOY: You haven't got any whiskers!

JUDITH: Father, you promised to tell us another story.

HENDRICK: Tell us about Hendrick Hudson!

OTHER CHILDREN: *(clamoring)* Oh yes, Rip! Tell us about Hendrick Hudson. What was he? Did you know him, Rip?

RIP: Sure, I knew him, from his boots to his whiskers. He was a fine Dutchman once, and explored all this part of the country, but he got drowned—oh, a hundred years ago!

LITTLE BOY: Old Clausen says Hendrick Hudson has come back to the mountains.

RIP: Old Clausen is a wander-wit.

LITTLE BOY: He says that Hendrick Hudson comes back to the Catskills once every twenty years. He and his men play a game called nine-pins, where you roll a ball. And every time they roll a ball, it makes thunder. Listen! *(A low mutter of thunder is heard. The children are frightened.)*

JUDITH: Oh Father, it makes my insides go up and down like a butter-churn.

RIP: Ach, that's all nonsense, Judy, that Johnny talks. Don't be frightened.

HENDRICK: Don't be scared, Judy. Old Clausen said he saw the sailors himself once, and they didn't hurt him.

JUDITH: How do you know? Old Clausen's lame!

HENDRICK: 'Twasn't Hendrick Hudson that made him lame. He tripped and fell on the mountain, and broke his leg.

JUDITH: And who made him trip and fall, Hendrick Vonderdonck? Tell me that.

HENDRICK: Nobody did. It was a piece of rotten log sticking out between the rocks.

JUDITH: *(crying furiously)* It wasn't! It was Hendrick Hudson and his sailors, that's who it was! Oh, Father!

RIP: *(taking her on his knee)* Ah, Judy, here. You're not scared of that old ghost, Hendrick Hudson. Johnny, what do you mean by putting such ideas in my little girl's head?

LITTLE BOY: *(to Judith)* Old fraidy-cat!

HENDRICK: You just be quiet, Johnny Doolittle! *(Boy makes a face at Hendrick behind his back)*

RIP: Now, don't you listen to Johnny Doolittle. You just sit down by my knee, and I'll tell you all about Hendrick Hudson, and his sailors, too. *(The children settle themselves while Rip clears his throat, and prepares to tell one of his big tales.)* Once upon a time, Hendrick Hudson was a fine Dutchman, who tried to find a way to China to sell the Chinamen some looking glasses. You know, because everything in China is backwards. He dresses himself up in his best shoe-buckles, and goes to see the king. And the king gives him a ship. They call it the Half-Moon, that ship—ja. You know why? Because it was going to be full pretty soon. He sailed it up the Hudson River, and plunk! They ran smack into the ground!

LITTLE GIRL: Then what happened?

RIP: You wait. They ran smack into the ground. And all those sailors began saving up their shaving water, and poured it overboard for the ship to float in. That's why they got so much beard. But it didn't do them any good. So they poured out the last of their beer, but it wouldn't float on that either. Then what do you think?

LITTLE BOY: What?

RIP: They saved up their breath for three days, and whooooo! They blew that dumb ship right up in the sky, where she's been flying ever since.

JUDITH: *(clapping her hands)* Oh Father! And is that why they call it the flying ship?

LITTLE GIRL: Tell us another one, Rip.

RIP: No, I got to mend my fence. Run along now.

LITTLE BOY: *(pretending to draw his bow)* Come and watch me shoot apples off the tree! *(The other children cheer and follow him off, waving good-bye to Rip.)*

RIP: *(waving)* Goodbye, Goodbye! Look you shoot yourselves good ripe apples!

HENDRICK: Rip, will you go fishing with us this afternoon?

JUDITH: Look, Hendrick's dug the worms already. *(Hendrick shows his pocket of bait.)* Please, you said you would.

RIP: I got to mend your mother's fence before the cow eats up the pumpkins, Judy.

HENDRICK: I know where there's some speckled trout.

RIP: *(sorely tempted)* Speckled? . . . No—no! I got to mend that fence!

JUDITH: Please, Father?

RIP: *(wrestling with himself)* No, no, I tell you!

HENDRICK: Aw, Rip.

JUDITH: Just this once?

RIP: The cow is just waiting to get her jaws on those pumpkins. Anyways, I got to do business with Landlord Vedder here. *(giving her a playful spank)* Now you and Hendrick run along and catch those fish.

HENDRICK: They were biting like anything a little while ago.

RIP: *(wavering)* . . . I got to mend that fence!

JUDITH: All right, Father.

HENDRICK: Come on then, Judy. I'll cut us two poles—one for you and one for me. *(They start off)*

RIP: *(calling after Hendrick)* Hendrick! . . . Did you say speckles?

HENDRICK: *(running back, followed by Judy)* Yes sir. Won't you please come?

RIP: No . . . no! Go along with you! *(The children start out again.)* Hendrick! Did you say they was biting?

HENDRICK: Yes sir.

JUDITH: Please come, Father.

HENDRICK: Well . . . no! That cow will eat up every pumpkin we got. Go along now. *(The two children go off.)* Take Wolf with you.

JUDITH: Here, Wolf! Good bye, Father.

RIP: *(calling after them)* Hendrick! *(The two children come back.)* How big did you say those speckles were?

HENDRICK: *(showing him)* Like that.

RIP: Hendrick, you cut three poles. *(All laugh. The children clap their hands and run out. The dog goes with them.)*

NICHOLAS: *(calling into the inn door)* Anna, Anna, bring some schnapps. We'll drink to your wife's health, Rip.

RIP: No, no, Nicholas, I already got too much drinks chalked up on your blackboard.

BROM: Come, drink to Judy's health, then. And it's all on me.

RIP: *(taking the drink proffered by the Maid)* We'll sing to her, ja? Derrick, you're a professor. You make the pitch, ja?

DERRICK: *(humming through his nose on a high pitch)* Hmmmm!

RIP and NICHOLAS: Too high! Too high!

BROM: Get on a stepladder, why don't you?

DERRICK: *(with facial gyrations, very low)* Hmmmm!

BROM: Now you was down in the cellar already.

DERRICK: *(almost humming the lining out of his nose)* Hmmmmm!

NICHOLAS: Come, Rip, you give us a start.

BROM: Yes, come on, Rip. The old dame will be back soon, and then we'll all have to make a clearance.

RIP: Oh, tunner vasser! Won't my old woman skin me when she finds me! *(They all laugh, while Rips nods dolefully.)* Well, here is Rip Van Winkle's warning to all single fellows. *(Rip stands apart to sing his verses, then joins his friends for the chorus, all linking arms, brandishing mugs, and swaying their bodies to the music.)*

"Listen, my friends, to caution's voice,
Ere the marriage knot you tie.
It is the devil with shrews to splice--
That nobody can deny.
That nobody can deny.

CHORUS: That nobody can deny—hi--hi!
That nobody can deny.

RIP: When a good wife to rule once wishes,
Her poor old spouse will soon rely
Upon her always wearing the breeches—
That nobody can deny.
That nobody can deny.

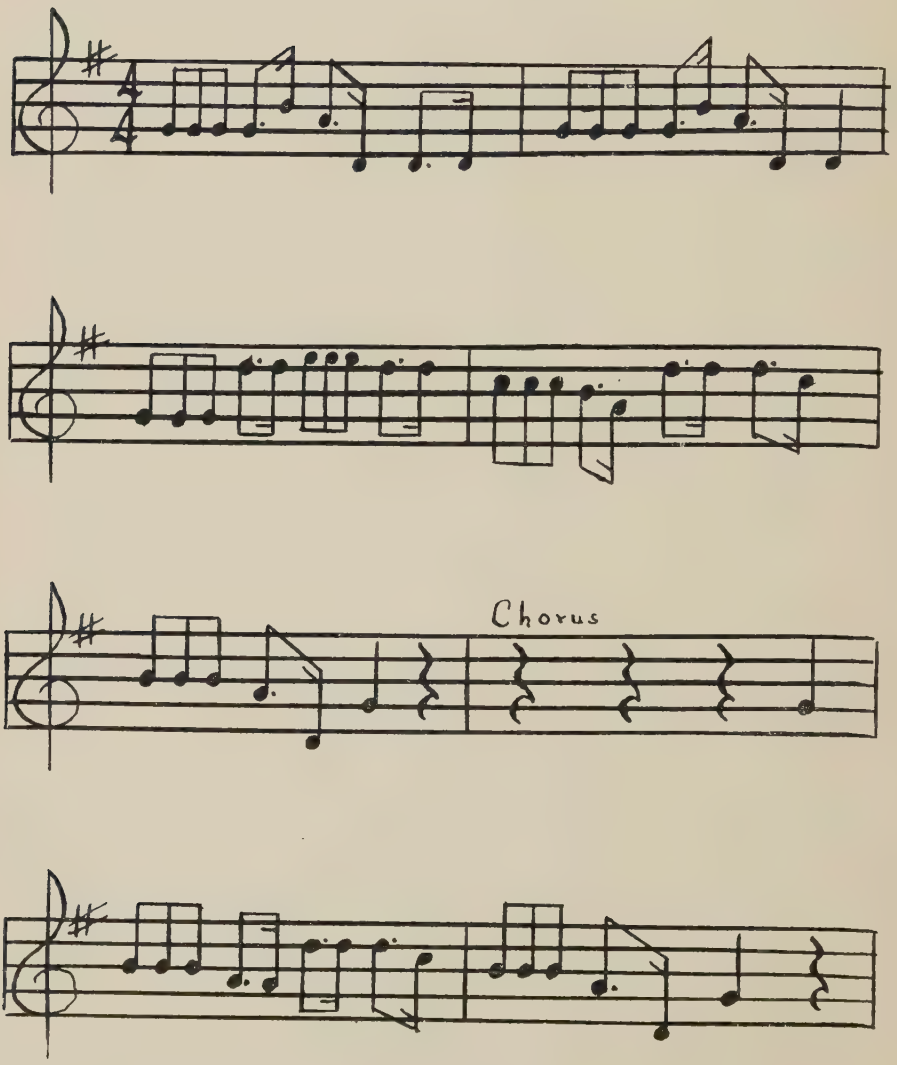
CHORUS: That nobody can deny—hi—hi!
That nobody can deny.
(Two little girls skip in, attracted by the song. They watch the men, skipping and swinging hands in time to the music.)

RIP: Yet there is a charm about them,
Though their voices are so high.
We can't do with them, we can't do without them—
That nobody can deny.
That nobody can deny.

RIP'S SONG

by

Lelie Timberman Smith



CHORUS: That nobody can deny—hi—hi!
That nobody can deny."
(They all quaff off their drinks, and settle down in their seats.)

DERRICK: Rip, your wife's a lemon-faced crow. You just ought to see me handle her once.

BROM: Me! You ought to let me try! I'd make her shiver the tiles off the roof, I would.

DERRICK: When I come up my front walk, my Wilhelmina shakes so hard, she shakes the bricks right out of the chimney.

BROM: When I step into my vestibule, my Katinka shakes so hard, the bread falls in the oven. *(An Amazonian voice calls offstage.)*

KATINKA: *(offstage)* Brom! Brom Dutcher!

BROM: *(leaving abruptly)* Coming, Katinka. *(They all laugh as he goes. Another stentorian voice calls from the other side.)*

WILHELMINA: *(offstage)* Derrick Van Bummel!

DERRICK: *(making a hurried exit)* It's Wilhelmina. Coming, Wilhelmina! Coming. *(Rip crosses, laughing, to Nicholas. Two village men saunter into the inn yard and sit at the table, thumping for service. The two little girls are sitting on Rip's door-step, playing with an abacus, or some quiet toy.)*

RIP: I wish I was brave men like them, to make my wife shiver the bricks out of the chimney. But I'd have to put the bricks back in again.

NICHOLAS: *(calling into the inn)* Anna, Anna, bring some schnapps. We got customers. *(The Maid brings out a tray of drinks, and serves the two men. A Pedlar enters from the walk, and stops to offer his wares to the Apple Woman.)*

PEDLAR: Any neck-cloths? Any mouse-traps, or antimaccassars? Currycombs? Kettles? Or cups without sassers?

APPLE WOMAN: No, no! The last time I bought my little girl a doll from you, the head came off.

PEDLAR: Fine!

APPLE WOMAN: What's fine about that?

PEDLAR: Then you had two presents to give her—a head and a body. *(A Village Lady enters, sees her two children on Rip's door-step, and hastens over to scold them in pantomine. The Pedlar follows her up.)* Any knives or forks or yellow wigs? Pocketbooks, plates, or spoons? Any thingamajigs, such as whirlamagigs? Any molds for macaroons?

VILLAGE LADY: *(swinging on him)* Shoo! *(She takes a child by each hand, and drags them off down the street. The Pedlar now singles out the two customers at the table.)*

PEDLAR: Any meerschaum pipes or curled perukes? Ginger-bread lions or lambs? Any tupenny bells, or thripenny frills? Any lamp-wicks, or parboiled clams? *(The men gesture him aside, and he goes to Rip.)* Here's a baby doll, the head sewed on, stitched on, glued on, screwed on—

RIP: *(taking it into his hands to look it over)* Look, Nicholas. Ain't it cute? I bet Judy doesn't catch a fish. She'd feel better if I bought her a doll. *(He empties his pocket ruefully, and counts the money, then returns it to his pocket.)* No, not today.

PEDLAR: It also says Mama! . . . Look! *(He holds the doll up, bends it over, beats it, and behind his hand squeaks, "Mama!")*

RIP: Did you hear that, Nicholas? *(He pulls out his money again.)* But I only got ninepence, to buy nails to fix the fence with.

PEDLAR: *(sweeping the money out of his hand)* Ninepence will buy it exactly. *(He pockets the money.)* Look, here's polish! Shine a horse as bright as sunshine.

RIP: I haven't any horse.

PEDLAR: That makes no difference. Here's a currycomb. Look at the bristles. *(There is a loud mooing offstage. Rip starts to run. Dame Van Winkle's voice is heard addressing the cow.)*

DAME VAN WINKLE: *(offstage)* Soo, Bossy! Get out of the beans!

RIP: *(pounding on the inn door)* Let me in! Let me in! *(The two customers at the table flee at the approach of Dame Van Winkle. Rip gets inside the inn in the nick of time, and slams the door in the Pedlar's face, as the Pedlar tries to keep up with him.)*

PEDLAR: Look at the bristles! Look at the handle! Look at the— *(Dame Van Winkle marches in belligerently, brandishing her broom-handle, and carrying a milking-stool.)*

DAME VAN WINKLE: Nicholas Vedder, you seen anything of Rip?

NICHOLAS: *(bravely)* If your tongue gets any sharper, look out, or you'll cut your lip on it. *(Derrick makes a blithe entrance, but seeing who occupies the floor, tries to slip out again without being seen.)*

DAME: *(to Nicholas)* You flat-faced whale! You're nothing but a bowl of blubber, Nicholas Vedder. *(She whirls on Derrick, catching him just as he is about to make good his escape.)* Derrick Van Bummel, come back here! Have you seen Rip anywhere around?

DERRICK: *(pretending nonchalance)* Rip? Let me see. I saw him yesterday afternoon, sitting on the—

DAME: I don't want him yesterday afternoon! *(Brom Dutcher has entered during this altercation, and tries to conceal himself under the table, but Dame has already spotted him.)* Brom Dutcher, where's my good-for-nothing husband? Don't tell me you don't know!

BROM: *(fetching up a good lusty yawn)* Me? I've been asleep.

DAME: Sleep! Sleep's all you do—any of you. Sleep, and guzzle ale by the hogshead. *(The Pedlar thrusts his nose under his arm.)*

PEDLAR: Any perfume? Any laces?

DAME: *(charging him with her broomstick)* I'll lace you! *(The Pedlar dodges.)* Derrick Van Bummel—

PEDLAR: *(bobbing up on the other side)* Knitting needles? Twine?

DAME: I'll twine you with a rope, you snooping shilly-shally! Selling me your rickety wares! *(The Pedlar ducks her aim.)* Nicholas Vedder—

PEDLAR: *(bobbing up again)* Any rolling-pins?

DAME: Now, there's something I might need.

PEDLAR: *(showing it)* A beauty!

DAME: *(rejecting it, pushing Pedlar aside, and marching grimly toward the inn door)* I'll want something bigger than that when I find Rip.

PEDLAR: Wait! Is your husband an ungainly, ill-favored lummox of a man, with a nose like a sausage? *(Rip looks out of the inn window, behind the Dame's back, and shakes his fist at the Pedlar.)*

DAME: That's Rip to the life. Where is he?

PEDLAR: A gangling, long-legged creature, with a face like a coffee-grinder?

DAME: *(Rip peers out again, but dodges as the Dame turns.)* You red-headed toadstool! Where is he?

PEDLAR: Buy this two-handled frying-pan, and I'll tell you!

DAME: What do I want with a two-handled frying-pan? All we have to eat, we can eat with one handle. Where is he?

PEDLAR: Just buy this patent mouse-trap straight from Amsterdam, and I'll tell you in a jiffy.

DAME: Mouse-trap! We haven't enough to eat ourselves, let alone tempt a mouse into the kitchen. All that lazy Rip Van Winkle provides wouldn't keep a cockroach from starving. You noodle-brained cat-a-cold! You babbling baboon! Get out of my way!

PEDLAR: Wait! Wait! Buy this coffee-pot and I'll tell you!

DAME: Coffee-pot! Coffee-pot! Did you say coffee-pot?

PEDLAR: *(encouraged)* With a spout. Such a spout!

DAME: I swear it's the same man. I bought a coffee-pot last year, and it only made tea. The man had black curly hair.

PEDLAR: *(clutching his hat on his head, he starts running in circles, then off.)* It wasn't me! It wasn't me! My hair's as red as fire! *(He runs out, clutching his hat. The Dame runs after him, shouting.)*

DAME: Give me back my money! *(After the stage has grown quiet, Derrick sticks out a cautious head from behind a chair, Brom creeps out from behind the tree, and Nicholas emerges from his newspaper. Rip peers out of the inn.)*

DERRICK: Sh! Rip, be careful. There's a storm brewing.

RIP: Ach, if she only brewed ale as good as storms.

BROM: The way I was crumpled up behind that tree, I got a crick in my legs. *(He takes a few fancy steps to straighten his legs.)*

NICHOLAS: Ach, a jig!

DERRICK: Come on, Rip. Just one good jig before she catches you. *(They pair off, and go through the motions of an old German jig, singing lustily all the while. While the merriment is at its height, Dame Van Winkle bursts in. Derrick dives under the table, Brom leaps for the shelter of the tree, and Nicholas takes refuge behind his newspaper.)*

DAME: Rip Van Winkle! Dancing, are you? Dancing with a lot of

lollipops while the cow eats up our last bean, pumpkin, and squash! Here you are,—*(She trips over Derrick's legs, sticking out under the table, and plants a firm kick squarely on the seat of his pants.)* Get out of the way, Derrick Van Bummel, you long-legged noncompoop. Pepper's too good to throw in your eyes. *(Derrick clambers out and makes for home, hastily. Brom seizes the opportunity to escape too, and scuttles away down the street. The Apple Woman discreetly wheels her cart elsewhere.)*

NICHOLAS: Noo, noo, Gretchen, to get as mad as that is enough to sink a blood-vessel already.

DAME: *(whirling on him)* You're nothing but a red-nosed old highwayman, Nicholas Vedder, and I hope you swallow your gold teeth! *(Nicholas bolts inside the inn just in time to miss the milking stool.)*

RIP: Look out, Gretchen, you'll pop a bodice string!

DAME: *(whirling on him)* A nice father you are, jigging with these lumpy-legged sit-abouts while the cow eats our last potato. Here we are—*(She begins to advance on him. Rip retreats around the table.)* The fence pickets hang like a sow's ears, this way and that. The pig is loose, the fields so full of weeds you can't find the fence, the rain's coming through our roof till you'd think it was meant for a sprinkling pot! And you gossip with a lot of he-grannies that don't know one end of a pitchfork from the other! It'll begin to storm in another minute and I'll wager you haven't even bought the nails for the fence. *(Judith creeps in behind the Dame. The dog, Wolf, follows her.)* Where's the ninepence I gave you? Let me see it. You haven't lost it, have you? *(Rip feels through his pockets one by one.)* Rip Van Winkle, have you spent that ninepence? *(She raises her hand to give him a blow.)*

RIP: *(still feeling, nonplussed)* Wait, now wait, Gretchen, just wait a minute . . .

DAME: *(with her hand still raised)* Quick! Where is it? You've swoggled it down in schnapps, that's what you've done! Our last ninepence!

RIP: *(with dignity)* I haven't swoggled it down in schnapps!

DAME: Where is it, then?

RIP: *(pulling out the doll)* Why, here it is!

DAME: A doll!

JUDITH: Father!

RIP: It says, "Mama!" Listen. *(He bends it as the Pedlar showed him. Nothing happens.)*

DAME: I'll mama you. You've let that good-for-nothing pedlar trick you, that's what!

RIP: *(bending it again)* But it said "Mama!" just as loud as you please.

DAME: *(snatching it out of his hand and throwing it on the ground)* Fool!

JUDITH: *(running forward to pick up the doll.)* Don't scold him, Mother! He loves us, that's why he bought a doll!

DAME: Loves us, does he? You'd be better off if you had less love and more to eat. *(To Rip)* Where's the squirrel you went out to shoot this morning? It's time to put it in the pot.

RIP: The squirrel?

DAME: Give it here, and heaven pity you if it isn't a fat one!

RIP: Why, about that squirrel, Gretchen . . . Just as I was going up the mountain, lickety-lickety—

DAME: Give it to me!

RIP: *(very deliberately)* Just as I was going up the mountain, lickety-lickety, there was the squirrel looking at me out of a tree—

DAME: And I suppose it fell right into your game bag! Let me have it.

RIP: Well, you see—he looked at me with his little bright eyes—two little bright eyes—just like he was saying, "Hello, Rip."

JUDITH: Did he, Father?

DAME: *(to Judith)* Hush!

RIP: So I just go Boom! with my gun, and—

JUDITH: *(distressed)* Oh, Father!

RIP: And shot the tree!

DAME: You mean you didn't shoot that squirrel?

RIP: I didn't have the heart.

DAME: You missed him on purpose, you lubbering water-wit!

RIP: But he smiled at me, Gretchen, just like he was ready to shake hands.

DAME: You let him go to spite me, you know you did! Here your wife is starving, your daughter is ready to eat church carpet. And you let a squirrel get away!

RIP: Ach, Judy, was you hungry? I didn't know you was hungry. I'll go back and shoot you a bunny rabbit.

DAME: Your wife can starve, but you'll shoot Judy a bunny rabbit. Do you think I'll let you get the rheumatism, and sit around all winter with your feet in my oven? You stay right here, while I go milk the cow. All we'll have for supper is bread and milk! *(With these terrible words, she storms out.)*

RIP: *(ruefully)* Ach, Judy, your father is an old duffer. He takes all the money, lends it, gives it away, he spends it on schnapps and little dolls that don't say Mama. Even old Wolf goes hungry.

JUDITH: Never mind, Father. You promised to dance a hornpipe for me when Mother wasn't looking.

RIP: All right. All right. Your father's an old fool, that's what he is. But he'll do anything that makes you happy. Come on, you dance with me. *(But at this point, the Dame rages in again.)*

DAME: Rip Van Winkle, what's happened to our cow?

RIP: Cow?

DAME: Every time I go near her, she switches her tail and roars!

RIP: Ach, I must have shot her a little.

DAME: Shot her?

RIP: When I missed the squirrel, the cow stuck her tail right in the way, and I hit her spang on the end of it.

DAME: *(screaming at him)* Now we have nothing but bread for supper! Rabbit-brain! Rattle-pate! *(Rip turns tail and starts to slip away.)* Where are you going?

RIP: Out in the storm, where it's quiet.

DAME: *(catching him by the scruff of the neck and slinging him into a chair.)* Sneak out, will you? Lumphead! *(She boxes him smartly on one side of the head.)* Numbskull! *(She boxes him on the other. Rip raises his arms to protect his face.)* Lend your last pound to willywits worse than you are!. *(She plants a good solid blow on his solar plexus. Rip lowers his arms to protect his stomach.)* You muddle-headed mushroom! *(She catches him by the hair and gives him a vigorous shaking.)* Little you care if your family's stomachs are empty as last year's birds' nests! *(Rip wrenches himself away and squats down out of harm's way on the other side of the table. Dame peels off one of her wooden shoes and aims it at him.)* I'm tired of your cracked brains and your shiftlessness! I'm done with you, do you hear?

RIP: *(having safely dodged the shoe, stops up his ears)* I can't help myself!

DAME: Get out!

JUDITH: Mother, listen! Listen!

DAME: What?

JUDITH: You're not going to drive Father out into the storm?

DAME: Why not?

RIP: It's all right, Judy. I'll go sleep on the mountain. It's all right.

DAME: All right, fiddlesticks! Don't ever come back again!

RIP: Ach, Gretchen, you're not sending me off for good, you'll feel different in the morning.

DAME: Take your gun with you! *(She thrusts his gun in his hands. There is a loud clap of thunder.)*

JUDITH: Mother, listen!

DAME: *(rescuing her wooden shoe)* Let him get wet. The wetter the better, for all I care. Take all your belongings with you.

RIP: Gretchen!

DAME: I mean it.

RIP: They're in the house.

DAME: I'll get them. *(She goes into the house. Judith cries.)*

RIP: Ach, Judy. She means it. I'm going to miss my little girl. Now you'll have to get Hendrick to tell you stories.

JUDITH: He can't tell them like you can.

RIP: To think I won't see your little blue eyes blinkin' at me any more. *(Judith sobs.)* Maybe if I come to the fence sometimes in the evening, and go "Quonk-quonk!" like a tree-frog, you'll slip out and talk to me a little, eh?

JUDITH: Oh Father, would you?

RIP: Don't cry. There, there. And you musn't be hungry when I'm gone away. I'll catch you a bunny rabbit now and then, and put it down in the garden in the hollow-tree. Won't that be fine?

JUDITH: *(crying)* Yes sir.

RIP: *(crying himself)* Don't cry. *(Both are sobbing with gusto when Dame Van Winkle comes out of the house with his bundle.)*

DAME: What are you two blubbering about now? Out you go. *(Judith runs toward the house.)* Where are you going?

JUDITH: Father has to have a piece of bread to take with him.

DAME: Not another crust nor smidgin does he get from my cupboard! *(Judith starts untying her little blue kerchief.)* Go and take your good-for-nothing hound with you! *(Rip whistles for his dog. Wolf comes running to him.)* *(Rip shoulders his pack, takes up his gun, and starts to go. Judith runs to him, holding out the blue scarf.)*

JUDITH: Father! Father!

RIP: Good bye, Judy.

JUDITH: Take this to put around your neck.

RIP: Ach, Judy, that's your best blue shawl.

DAME: Get! *(Thunder. The storm lashes wildly. Rip takes the scarf, kisses Judith, and goes out.)*

JUDITH: Listen, Mother! . . . Listen!

RIP: Here, Wolf! *(Dog runs to follow him. Judith watches them off, frightened.)*

DAME: Yes, I hear it! You'd better get inside the house before you get drenched.

JUDITH: But Mother, Hendrick Hudson is up on the mountain! *(She starts groping toward her father, crying after him.)* Father . . . Father! *(Dame Van Winkle, without more ado, grabs her into the house, but the curtain falls on the lonely note of the little girl who has lost her father.)* Father! Come back! Father!

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

A glade in the mountains. There is a background of trees blackly silhouetted against a dim moonlit sky. Rocks and stumps shine in a strange glare. Thunder mutters, softly from time to time. Rip enters cautiously, looking over his shoulder. He stumbles against a stump, jumps, and peers around him.

RIP: *(sighing)* Ach . . . nothing but a stump! *(He settles down against it wearily, yawns, puts his bundle against it for a pillow, and begins to doze off. There is a rustling sound. The swinging of a ship's bell can be heard through the gloom. The air grows heavy with rhythms and cadences. A sort of earthy music begins to grow on our consciousness, and as it swells, makes itself known as "The Hall of the Mountain King" from the Peer Gynt Suite. A shriveled little sailor with a long gray beard materializes from the shadows, and starts with great solemnity to set up a row of ninepins. Others follow and with sad expressions they start pitching doleful volleys at the ninepins, which collapse with a roar of thunder. When they have been at the game for a few moments, another dwarf appears from the opposite direction, carrying a keg on his shoulder. He discovers Rip, snoring by the stump, and calls to the players. They cluster about, gloating over the sleeping mortal. Prompted by the lastcomer, they pantomine their designs on Rip, pretending to drink from the keg, and then pretending to sleep for a long time. They start capering impishly about the prone figure, and at a given signal, they all melt away again into the shadows. Soon, we hear a far-away tinkling sound which sounds like distant ghostly voices calling in chorus—"Rip Van Wi-n-nkle!" Rip stirs. He sits up, stretching. He rubs his eyes and peers around him.)* Ach, what a dream! *(The distant, tinkling call is repeated—"Rip Van-n-n Win-n-nkle!")*

Yoo Hoo! *(There is no answer. The call comes again, closer. "Rip Van-n-n Win-n-nkle!" Rip scrambles to his feet, and makes a megaphone of his hands.)*

What you want? *(There is no answer. Rip turns back to his stump, but is stopped short by the sight of a shriveled little sailor with a long beard, carrying a keg.)*

What kind of a nightmare is this? *(The dwarf, disregarding Rip completely, drops his keg wearily, and sits on it.)*

Good evening. *(The dwarf looks straight ahead of him.)*

I said Good evening. *(The dwarf turns and examines him.)*

I said—it's nice weather we're having. *(Thunder. The dwarf walks slowly all around him, examining him from all angles. Rip eyes him warily.)*

What you got in your keg? *(The dwarf looks wise, but says nothing.)*
Nails? *(The dwarf shakes his head.)*
Crackers? *(The dwarf shakes his head.)*
Is it—*(The dwarf capers in a silent hornpipe dance.)*
You don't say! *(Rip also capers. They embrace.)*
You want me to help you up the hill with it? *(The dwarf nods.)*
Why didn't you say so? *(Rip shoulders the keg.)*
Go ahead, old whiskerjaws. Rip Van Winkle always helps his friends. *(The dwarf leads Rip a devious route all over the stage. They go behind the trees, between the rocks, and over the stumps, eventually come right back to the center of the stage. The dwarf shows Rip exactly where to put the keg down, and then starts filling up the huge stein which he carries at his belt. The thunder has been increasing, rolls furiously, shaking the mountain. Wind screams. The glade grows alternately light and dark. Lightning plays about the gully.)*

RIP: *(setting the keg on the ground and rubbing his arm)* My, but that's heavy. From the feel in my arm, it's full of coffin nails. *(Second Dwarf ventures out.)*
Who are you? . . . Oh, you're the little fellow I just came up the hill with. *(Second Dwarf shakes his head, and indicates the First Dwarf.)*
Mercy, I just carried the keg, and already I'm seeing double. Are you his brother? *(Second Dwarf nods. A third dwarf has appeared.)*
Is that another brother? *(Dwarves nod in unison. Other dwarves appear.)*
Is that another? And another? Are you all brothers? *(Dwarves nod in answer to each question.)*
My goodness, your family tree must be a redwood. *(Dwarves shake their heads.)*
What are you, miners? *(They shake their heads.)*
No, you couldn't mine with whiskers like those. I know! You're street cleaners! *(Dwarves shake their heads.)*
Not street cleaners? What fine brooms you've got! *(He pulls on the First Dwarf's beard. He withdraws indignantly.)*
Are you pirates? *(Dwarves shakes their heads.)*
That's too bad you're not pirates. I've got somebody I'd like you to walk the plank. Why don't you talk? All deaf and dumb? *(They nod.)*
All dumb! My goodness, what fine wives you would make! Well, it's time for me to go home. *(They shake their heads violently, and stamp their feet.)*
I got to go home now, I've got to see my little girl, Judy. *(They offer him their mugs.)*
Is that schnapps? *(They nod.)*
I don't want any. *(They laugh, high and shrill and tinkly.)*
. . . Poor Judy, I expect she's missing me by now! *(They shake their*

heads sadly, making a sympathetic sound through their teeth. Then they offer their mugs, as if to console him for his great sorrow.)

No, no, I must go down now, so I can call to her like a tree-frog. I've got to stand outside the fence and call "Quonk-Quonk!" *(The dwarves jeer "Bah!" long and low.)*

You think I'm scared to walk into my front door and call her right? *(They nod.)*

So would you be, I bet. *(The dwarves cackle and shake their heads.)* You wouldn't?

All I got to say is, you don't know Dame Van Winkle. *(They laugh their high-pitched laugh again.)*

I used to think after three-four mugs, I'd go home and stamp my foot at her. But it didn't last. *(They hoot in a high-pitched whine.)*

Maybe you think you could stamp your foot. *(They nod vigorously.)*

It's been how many years since I tried. Let's see, I've been married nine years. It's been nine years since I tried it last. *(He weeps.)*

RIP: I would like to see Judy once more. She has yellow curls, like wood shavings. Yellow. They go round and round on your little finger. *(Dwarves sigh heavily, and offer mugs. Rip eyes the mugs warily.)*

Maybe if I was to take one little drink, I could go down and pound on Gretchen's door. I could look in the window and see Judy. If I could only see as much as her little foot just once! *(The dwarves sniff loudly, then proffer mugs.)*

Give it here! *(They extend the mugs eagerly.)*

No, no! It wouldn't last me long enough to get down the mountain. I'll never see Judy's little red apron with holes in it any more. *(The dwarves dash the tears from their eyes. Rip reaches for a mug.)*

Give it to me, and I'll try to forget all about her. *(The dwarves press their mugs on him. He starts to take one, then catches himself.)*

No, no. I don't want to forget her. I want to remember her, just like she was. Loving her rascal father with little blue eyes. I swear off! I swear off, so I can remember Judy! Give me a drink to bind the oath! *(He drinks, taking the mug from the dwarf nearest him. The dwarf is wildly excited, and when Rip has quaffed off all that is in the mug, the dwarf starts capering madly about. Each dwarf capers as soon as Rip has drunk from his mug, and soon all are dancing around him, to the swelling music of "Anitra's Dance" from the "Peer Gynt Suite.")*

Now I can go down and stamp my foot at Gretchen. What a brew! *(He takes the second mug.)*

Now I can pound the door down. What a taste! *(He takes the third mug.)*

Now I can knock the door off its hinges. What a smell it has! *(He staggers to the fourth mug.)*

I'll pull off the tiles! I'll pull the bricks out of the chimney! I'll kick

a hole in the roof, and fetch Judy out! *(He capers around to the fifth mug.)*

I'll pull her apron string from behind, and I'll say, "Judy! Judy! I've come back! Your mother is tied up in the cowshed, and I've brought home a wild-cat for dinner!" *(He quaffs off the sixth mug with total abandon.)*

You'll all come to supper, and Judy will bake us a johnny-cake as big as . . . as big as—*(The dance has reached a climax of madness and gaiety.)*

My head! *(Rip spins around and around, in a circle of dwarves.)*

My . . . Judy! . . . Ju—dy! *(He stumbles, catches himself, and slowly sinks to a heap on the ground. The dwarves dance merrily around Rip, laughing. It thunders, the lights fade. At a given signal, the dwarves disappear behind the rocks, still laughing. The stage is in total darkness. A flash of lightning reveals Rip alone on the stage, snoring soundly through the storm.)*

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

Scene One

The curtain rises on the same mountain glade, twenty years later. A tangled mound of autumn leaves occupies the center of the stage. The rocks are covered with moss and vines. The stage is silent for a moment, in the morning sun. A leaf sifts down. Another follows, as they have been falling now for twenty seasons. Then the leaf mound begins to quake.

RIP: *(under the leaves.)* Ah! . . . Ahhhh! . . . Oh! *(He yawns, stretches stiffly, and slowly tries to sit up.)*
Oh, my poor back! *(He falls back stiffly, and tries again.)*
What . . . where . . . *(He shakes off some of the leaves. His snow white hair ripples to his waist. A beard falls over his moulding vest.)*
All night on the mountain. What will Gretchen say? *(He begins slowly, with creaking joints, to brush the leaf mould from his clothing. He stops to consider a small Christmas tree, growing from his vest pocket.)*
That's funny. I never wore Christmas trees in my pocket before. Especially with roots. *(He throws it away, and stares at his shoes.)*
Mould! *(He leans forward with difficulty, to look more closely.)*
Mildew! *(He touches the toe with a stiff finger, and is startled.)*
Moss, by golly!
Ouch! Rheumatism! What a winter I'll spend, with my feet in Gretchen's stove! *(He discovers his beard, and gives it a wondering tug.)*

Am I in a side-show? *(He tries to pull it out, but the pain stops him.)* Ach, I must be dreaming. Or maybe I took a drink last night. *(He starts looking for his gun.)*

Where's my gun? *(He staggers to his feet. Louder:)*

Where's my gun! *(He picks up his crumbling old weapon.)*

Where's my good gun? . . . Thieves! They've taken my good gun, and left me this! Where's my dog. Wolf! He'll catch them. Here, Wolf! *(He whistles. There is a distant echo. He stumbles over a mug, picks it up, and regards it wonderingly, then he spies the keg, and remembers.)*

Those little fellows! Those little fellows with beards! They stole my gun and whistled my dog away. Wolf! Here, Wolf! What kind of a a place is this? *(He calls desperately.)* Wolf! Wolf! Good dog! Here, Wolf! *(He hobbles off down the mountain, crying "Wolf! Wolf!" as the curtain falls.)*

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

Scene Two

The setting is the same as Act One. The sign has been changed from "King George Inn" to "Union Hotel, by Jonathan Doolittle." The ruby face of George III remains on the sign, but his coat is now buff and blue, his scepter has become a sword, and the crown has become a cocked hat. Bold lettering underneath identifies him as General Washington.

The tree and the bench are gone, and in their place a flagpole now flaunts the Stars and Stripes. Nearby, a voting booth has been set up. Villagers bustle up to take their turn at the polls.

Rip's house has fallen to pieces. Weeds entirely obscure the fence. The door is off its hinges, and the whole scene presents an appearance of decay.

The Town Crier enters, banging on his metal plate, and crying:

TOWN CRIER: Oyez! Oyez! All male citizens over twenty-one are hereby notified to present themselves at the ballot booth to vote on a constitution for these United States! Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!..... *(Derrick Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, now a prosperous politician, stooped but pompous, in lace ruffles and a wooden leg, stumps in, and bangs spang into the Town Crier.)*

DERRICK: Look where you're going, sirrah!

TOWN CRIER: Look where you're going yourself!

DERRICK: Puppy!

TOWN CRIER: Tory!

DERRICK: How dare you call me a Tory! I'm Derrick Van Bummel, congressman from the district of Tarrytown, returned from the Congress to cast my vote.

TOWN CRIER: And I'm the Town Crier!

DERRICK: What of it?

TOWN CRIER: Why, you egotistical old chalk-chewer, I'll show you what of it! Let me by! *(Van Bummel angrily thrusts out his cane to keep the Town Crier from walking over him. The Town Crier seizes the end of it and shoves. Van Bummel loses his balance and sits down.*

DERRICK: Oomf! . . . *(From the ground up)* . . . I'll have the law on you for this!

TOWN CRIER: *(Standing akimbo)* I'm the law!

DERRICK: Why, you insolent nincompoop, I help make the laws!

TOWN CRIER: You cudget-brats! You and your puny pen-pushers only make the laws. Who lets people know about them? Me! There's a hundred Congressmen, but only one Town Crier! Get out of my way!

DERRICK: *(Catches at the Town Crier's ankles)* You conceited leatherlungs! . . . You bundle of bombast, you . . . you . . .

TOWN CRIER: *(Striding over him and drowning him out)* Oyez . . . oyez . . . oyez . . . *(He strides off stage. The noise gradually dies away in the distance. Dame Buskirk meanwhile bustles in.)*

DAME BUSKIRK: What are you men quarreling about I could hear you half mile down the road as I was coming to see how the election was going my soul I never heard such a racket. Who's this on the ground? I declare it's Schoolmaster Van Bummel that went off and joined the militia and got himself elected to Congress . . . *(She starts helping Van Bummel to his feet.)* What are you doing on the ground here let me help you brush yourself off. My my my your ruffles are all dirty and you've popped a button, too. Here it is rolled clear over here. Come into the inn and I'll sew it back on for you before I do another thing.

VAN BUMMEL: *(Limping and brushing his ruffles)* Ah, Dame Buskirk, things aren't what they used to be. A man pushed into the dust with his own cane, and by a Town Crier, too!

DAME BUSKIRK: Things certainly have changed around here and not everything's for the better, look at all this hustling and bustling and everybody trying to talk at once, things used to be quiet in the old days when a man could smoke his pipe and read his newspaper in the yard, and a woman could come there and bring him the news. *(They disappear into the inn. Two Children come tiptoeing into the yard. Diedrich is leading Frieda by the hand.)*

DIEDRICH: Come here, Frieda, and I'll show you the haunted house.

FRIEDA: *(pointing)* Is that it?

DIEDRICH: Yes! An old man lived there once upon a time till his wife drove him out into the middle of a thunderstorm.

FRIEDA: *(Who knows this by heart)* With her broom?

DIEDRICH: With her broom, yes. Don't interrupt. And a little while afterwards they heard it thunder ter-rib-bly, and the old man was never heard of any more.

FRIEDA: What made it thunder, the ghosties?

DIEDRICH: Sure it was ghosties, up there in the mountain. Look, I'll show you where he lived. *(He takes her hand and leads her through the door of Rip's house. A man comes out of the voting booth, looking pleased with himself. Another Man enters the booth. Several Passersby enter and wait their turn. A Man with a Soapbox, his pockets filled with colored handbills, hurries in, deposits his soapbox, which wobbles. He mounts it, teeters, and starts haranguing the Bystanders.)*

SOAPBOX: Friends . . . citizens . . . fellowcountrymen . . . *(The box wobbles. He leaps off as if on purpose, and holds out a pink handbill to one of the Bystanders)* . . . Have a handbill! *(He climbs back on the box.)* . . . I'm here to tell you to vote for General Washington. Let us exert our rights as citizens! . . . Remember Valley Forge! . . .

Remember the Brandywine! . . . Remember Bunker's Hill! *(The box throws him. He repeats the ruse . . .* Have a handbill! *(He remounts)* . . . Remember Lexington and Concord! . . . Remember the Minute Men! . . . the Heroes of '76! . . . *(This time the box tosses him off backward. He picks himself up and starts chasing his audience, which is distracted by a rising murmur off left. He has to content himself by thrusting handbills into people's pockets as they stand with their backs turned toward him. Rip Van Winkle enters left, followed by a swarm of villagers.)*

VILLAGERS (ad lib): He's crazy, that's what he is!
Never saw the like of him before, calling "Wolf! Wolf!" and asking about people a body never heard of!
Look at the beard on him!
And that gun!
Sh . . . . Watch what he's going to do now!
(Rip, walking in a daze, totters about the square, staring at the inn, pacing around the flagpole, peering at the sign in bewilderment, and finally ending up in front of his own door. He hides behind the flagpole.)

RIP: *(Tentatively)* Quonk! Quonk! *(Nothing happens.)* . . . Judy! Judy! . . . Ach, where is Judy? . . . Wolf! . . . *(He comes out from behind the flagpole)* Wolf! Here, Wolf! *(He peers in the window)* GRETCHEN! *(He dodges behind the flagpole and waits. The door starts to open slowly.)* That's done it! . . . *(The Two Children peer out, terrified, from behind the opening door.)* Ach . . . Judy!

DIEDRICH: My name's Diedrich!

RIP: I don't know any boy named Diedrich! Don't you know where Judy is?

FRIEDA: Are you a ghostie?

RIP: I'm beginning to wonder, myself!

FRIEDA: I don't believe you're a ghostie! You're just a crazy old man!

DIEDRICH: Look out, Frieda!

RIP: I tell you what, we'll find out. You pull my whiskers. If it doesn't hurt, I'm a ghostie. If it does hurt, I'm a crazy old man, ja?

FRIEDA: Ja!

RIP: We'll sit over here on the bench . . . Hold on, where is the bench?

FRIEDA: What bench?

RIP: The bench that was here last night!

DIEDRICH: There never was any bench. I told you he was crazy, Frieda!

RIP: *(Holding his head)* Them schnapps!

DIEDRICH: He's a ghostie, I tell you! *(He pulls Frieda away. They run out.)*

RIP: Ach! Children! And they run away from me! *(The Man on the Soapbox plucks his sleeve and pokes a green handbill at him. Rip looks at it this way and that. The Man comes out of the voting booth and eyes him superciliously.)*

VOTER: What do you mean, sir, arriving at a free election with a gun on your shoulder? Have you come here to incite a riot in our town?

SOAPBOX: Have you voted yet? Which side are you on?

BYSTANDER: Yes, are you a Federal? Or a Democrat?

SOAPBOX: Have you voted for General Washington?

RIP: Who's he?

BYSTANDER: Who is he!

VOTER: Where've you been the last twenty years?

SOAPBOX: *(Pointing to the sign)* There!

RIP: *(Staring at the sign)* What's that funny-looking hat they put on King George? Somebody's going to get put in the stocks making funny with His Majesty like that!

VILLAGERS *(ad lib)* Traitor!

He's a spy!

A redcoat!

Lobsterback!

String him up!

A thief! A Tory and a thief!

Put him in the stocks!

Hang him! *(They hustle and jostle Rip this way and that. One tries to pull his gun away. Another explores his pockets for spoons and pulls out only a few acorns, which he throws away in disgust.)*

RIP: *(Holding onto his gun)* I meant nobody any harm!

VOTER: What are you doing here, tell us that!

RIP: I — Aren't any of my friends around?

VOTER: Who are you friends?

RIP: Where's Nick Vedder?

BYSTANDER: Who?

RIP: Nicholas Vedder. He owns the inn.

BYSTANDER: Never heard of him.

VOTER: Jonathan Doolittle owns the inn.

OLD WOMAN: *(Coming forward and peering under her hand at Rip)* Vedder! I remember a Nick Vedder! Been dead and gone these eighteen years. Tombstone's even toppled over.

RIP: What about Brom Dutcher?

VOTER: Brom? Dutcher? Oh, he went off to the army a long time ago, very beginning of the war, in fact.

RIP: *(Feebly)* What war?

VOTER: Why, *the* war! The Revolution! Some say he was killed. Anyway, he's never come back.

RIP: *(More and more puzzled)* What about Derrick Van Bummel?

VOTER: Congressman Van Bummel?

OLD WOMAN: He's here today! Came home to cast his vote!

BYSTANDER: Call him out! He'll set you right! He's a very smart man. *(He steps importantly to the door of the inn)* Mr. Van Bummel! *If* you please!

RIP: Maybe I come down the wrong side of the mountain. Could you tell me what town this is?

SOAPBOX: *(Declaiming)* Tarrytown on the Hudson, foot of the Catskill Mountains, State of New York, United States of America!

RIP: Ach, then it isn't New Amsterdam!

VOTER: Certainly not! Where've you been? It hasn't been New Amsterdam since the Duke of York took it away from the Dutch nearly twenty years ago! *(Rip shakes his head hopelessly as Schoolmaster Van Bummel comes out with Dame Buskirk. She is putting her needle and thread back in her pocket.)*

DAME: I always say it's a man's privilege to burst his buttons, and a woman's business to sew them on, and the way to a man's heart often as not isn't through his stomach at all, but through a buttonhole, and many a fine one I stitched for Buskirk when he was alive, I must say—

BYSTANDER: *(importantly)* Mr. Van Bummel, if you will be so good as to step over here? This fellow claims to know you.

RIP: Derrick Van Bummel! With a pot like a brewer, and all done up in ruffles!

DERRICK: *(haughtily)* I beg your pardon?

RIP: It's me, Derrick! Don't you remember me? Only yesterday it was, we sat together here on this bench, and drank schnapps. No—maybe it was day before yesterday. You remember me—eh?

DERRICK *(eyeing Rip severely)* My good fellow, you must be out of your mind. I never saw you before in my life. Step aside, please. I'm about to exercise the privilege of a citizen.

VILLAGERS: So he knows the Congressman, eh?
Imposter!
Mountebank! He's trying to bamboozle us!
Poor simpleton! Take his gun before he does a mischief with it.

RIP: Ach, it's not even my gun. Maybe I am crazy. Maybe this isn't Nicholas Vedder's Inn. Maybe this is not my house. And maybe this isn't Dame Buskirk . . . Ahem! Are you Dame Buskirk?

DAME: Mercy on us! What did you say?

RIP: Are you Dame Buskirk?

DAME: *(in one breath)* Yes, I am, how did you know, you're a stranger in these parts aren't you, at least I haven't seen you before, are you visiting somebody here?

RIP: Thank Heaven! The same old Dame Buskirk!

DAME: We don't often have visitors here, being too far up the river, and when we do it's a sensation, especially when they come from as strange a country as you must have come from, is your home very far?

RIP: *(with a glance at his own house)* Well, no. That is, I don't know. You see I just came down from the mountains—

DAME: Oh those mountains, I've heard some hair-raising tales about those mountains I can tell you, and the people that live up there. So you're one of them, well I always heard they were queer, but I must admit I wasn't quite prepared for—ahem—this.

RIP: Wait just a minute, Dame. Would you do me the big favor to tell me who owns that inn?

DAME: Oh yes, it belongs to Jonathan Doolittle, an old skinflint. Jonathon is, and they do say—

RIP: Little Johnny Doolittle, that washed beer bottles in the kitchen?

DAME: Ja, did you know him when he was little? Well, he's grown up into a perfect miser, and they say he has most a hundred American dollars hid under a rotten plank in his barn—

RIP: Ach, and who lives in this house over here?

DAME: Nobody lives there. Nor has, for years. *(Importantly)* It's haunted!

RIP: Ach, haunted is it? Tell me . . . isn't there anybody here that used to know Rip Van Winkle?

(Derrick Van Bummel has come out of the voting booth, and stops to attend this scene. A young woman carrying a baby in her arms pushes her way to the front of the crowd, to look more closely at Rip.)

JUDY: Rip Van Winkle?

DAME: Oh yes I used to know Rip Van Winkle, used to buy milk from him whenever he remembered to bring it, bad provider but a good neighbor, been gone for twenty years God rest his soul.

RIP: Derrick Van Bummel, you used to know Rip Van Winkle.

DERRICK: Certainly I knew him. Are you claiming to know him, too? My good man, Rip Van Winkle can't help you. He went away in a rainstorm twenty years ago, and has never been heard of since. Everybody knows he was carried away by Indians.

RIP: Carried away by Indians, eh? *(The baby begins to cry, and Judy tries to quiet him.)* Dame Buskirk, don't you know me? *(The baby cries.)* Derrick Van Bummel, don't you know me?

JUDY: *(soothing the baby.)*
Hush, Rip. The old man won't hurt you. Go to sleep, Rip.

RIP: *(focusing his attention on her)*
What did you call him?

JUDY: Sir?

RIP: The baby, what is his name?

JUDY: We call him Rip, sir. He's named for my father, sir—Rip Van Winkle.

RIP: Your father? . . . Judy! My little girl, Judy, all growed up! Judy, don't you know me? Doesn't anybody here know old Rip Van Winkle?

JUDY: Father! *(She hastily hands the baby to a neighbor, and rushes to embrace Rip.)* FATHER!

RIP: Judy! My little girl Judy, all growed up!

JUDY: Oh, Father!

RIP: Ach, didn't you know I was dead, Judy, and carried off by Indians? I'm a ghost now.

JUDY: No you're not.

RIP: How do you know?

JUDY: Because ghosts don't wear blue shawls that their daughters gave them when they went away.

DAME: *(craning forward)* Sure enough! That's the very shawl I knitted for Judy Van Winkle years ago. I guess I know my own knitting. It is Rip Van Winkle!

DERRICK: *(doubtfully)* Is it really you, Rip?

DAME: Of course it is! I know my own knitting, even if it is covered with mildew!

DERRICK: Rip, you old limberjaw! Why didn't you say so in the first place?

VILLAGERS: It is Rip! Look at the patch on his knee.
Many a time I've sat on that patch while he told us stories.
That's Rip's old gun. He used to go squirrel hunting with it.
Rip, welcome home, neighbor.

DERRICK: Rip, you old vagabond, it's a happy occasion. Let's all sing one of your old songs, eh? And then we'll drink some schnapps, eh? Ho, Innkeeper. Schnapps for everybody! Rip Van Winkle's back after twenty ears! It's a celebration!

RIP: Wait a minute . . . Judy, how is your mother, Gretchen, eh?

JUDY: She's dead, Father. About ten years ago.

RIP: Dead, eh? Ach, the poor soul! The poor, poor soul. I ought to be sorry, eh?

JUDY: She burst a blood vessel, scolding at a New England pedlar.

RIP: I was afraid she would do something like that. The poor, poor soul!

DERRICK: Well, Rip, come and sing a song, and you'll feel better.

VILLAGERS: *(a barmaid has come out of the Inn carrying a tray of steins which she passes around).*
How about it?
Let's have a song! Is Isaac here? Fiddle away, Isaac! Play us our Laughing Song. Can you still sing, Rip?

RIP: Ja, just like a couple of happy frogs! *(He starts the song, swinging his stein, and the others swing theirs. Once they get well into it, Rip starts to jig, and the others follow suit, until they are all dancing in a quick, short shuffle. The song they sing should be a good, lusty German tune. The opening chorus from Act Two of The Gondoliers is suggested, and may be sung with the following words:)*

CHORUS:

In our native land, where flows the Rhine,
In infancy we culled the vine.
We toiled and worked with patient care,
But poor and scanty was our fare.
Till tempting waves with anxious toil,
We landed on America's soil.
Now though we're not with riches gay,
We laugh and dance the hours away.
Although we're not with riches gay,
We laugh and dance the hours away.

Ha-ha, ha-ha, ha-ha, ha-ha, ha-ha, ha-ha, ha-ha, ha-ha, ha-ha.
Ha-ha, ha-ha, ha-ha, ha-ha, ha-ha, ha-ha, ha-ha, ha-ha, ha-ha.
(The song ends with a burst of merriment, and the crowd leads Rip over and seats him on the soapbox under the flagpole. He leans back at his ease.)

VILLAGERS: Now Rip, tell us your story.
Where have you been for the last twenty years.
Start at the beginning and tell us exactly what happened.

JUDY: Yes, Father, start with the thunderstorm.

DAME: Don't leave out a single thing you remember, and don't start putting in things you don't recollect.
(Judy puts the baby in Rip's arms. Freida and Deidrich tiptoe forward, and creep close to listen. Except for their costumes, they might be the same children who listened to Rip's story in Act One, twenty years ago. The shadows start growing longer as Rip leans forward mysteriously.)

RIP: When it thunders in the mountains, don't ever let anybody tell you it isn't old Hendrick Hudson himself and his little fellows . . . with ninepins, ja . . . and sailor suits . . . and pointed hats . . . and long, beards hanging down to their heels—
(As if to bear him out, there is a long , low mutter of distant thunder. The curtain falls slowly.)

CURTAIN

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Late that night, they all creep into the big old Penny house, to help "Mr. Penny" recover the hidden treasure with which Sally's imagination has provided him. There follows a highly comical scene in which the custodian of the house thinks the children are ghosts, the children think the tramp is a ghost, and unexpected occurences make everybody's hair stand on end.

They find no treasure, but "Mr. Penny" finds a paper establishing Sally's family connections, and proving her legitimate heir to the Penny estate. And the next morning, when Sally is about to be taken off to the orphan asylum, it is "Mr. Penny" who saves the day.

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